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District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **TONOLEA MAN SENTENCED TO 24 YEARS IN PRISON FOR BURNING MAN TO DEATH**

PHOENIX – Alvin Franke Bennett, 20, of Tonolea, Ariz., was sentenced here to 24 years in prison, by U.S. District Judge Stephen M. McNamee. Bennett had pleaded guilty on March 1, 2007 to Murder, Second Degree.

On or about October 13, 2004, Bennet and Jason Bigman were in a pickup truck east of Kaibeto, Ariz. within the confines of the Navajo Indian Reservation. They drove past the residence of a man they believed had weapons inside and the two defendants decided to steal the guns. As they entered the front door, they discovered that the man they believed resided there was not there, but another man was. They demanded that the man tell them where the guns were. In response to his statements that he did not know, they began to punch and kick him. At some point they took the victim outside to a storage shed but could not locate any guns. Jason Bigman set a fire in the shed and they left the victim in the shed and returned inside the hogan. After they heard the victim call out that his legs were on fire, they returned to him. They dumped a couple of buckets of water on him but the fire was not completely extinguished. They left him still talking in the shed and left the area. However, the fire continued to burn and eventually caused his death.

Bennett was originally charged as juvenile due his age of 17 at the time of the offense. He later agreed to be tried as an adult and pleaded guilty to Second Degree Murder.

Co-defendant Jason Bigman had previously pleaded guilty to Second Degree Murder and was sentenced to 30 years in prison on December 15, 2005.

The investigation in this case was conducted by Navajo Department of Law Enforcement and the FBI. The prosecution was handled by Vincent Q. Kirby, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR07-238-PCT-SMM  
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-180(Bennet)

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